MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED™

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MIDNIGHT SONS

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$3.95 US/$4.95 CAN/£2.95 UK

MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED

"THE BEGUILING"

starring
MODRED, VENGEANCE, MORBIUS and WEREWOLF BY NIGHT
and introducing
WILDPRIDE

DAVID QUINN
Writer
JOHN HIXSON MARK TENNEY
Pencilers
SCOTT KOBLISH ANDREW PEPOY RICH RANKIN
Inkers
JANICE CHIANG
Letterer
MIKE WORLEY
Colorist

✦

"KINDRED SPIRITS, LOST SOULS"

starring
BLAZE

TOM BREVOORT MIKE KANTEROVICH
Writers
JOHN BRIDGES
Penciller
MAX DOUGLAS with RICHARD PACE
Inkers
JON BABCOCK
Letterer
SARRA MOSSOFF
Colorist

✦

EVAN SKOLNICK
Editor
BOBBIE CHASE
Group Editor
TOM DeFALCO
Editor in Chief

Cover painting by ALAN RABINOWITZ

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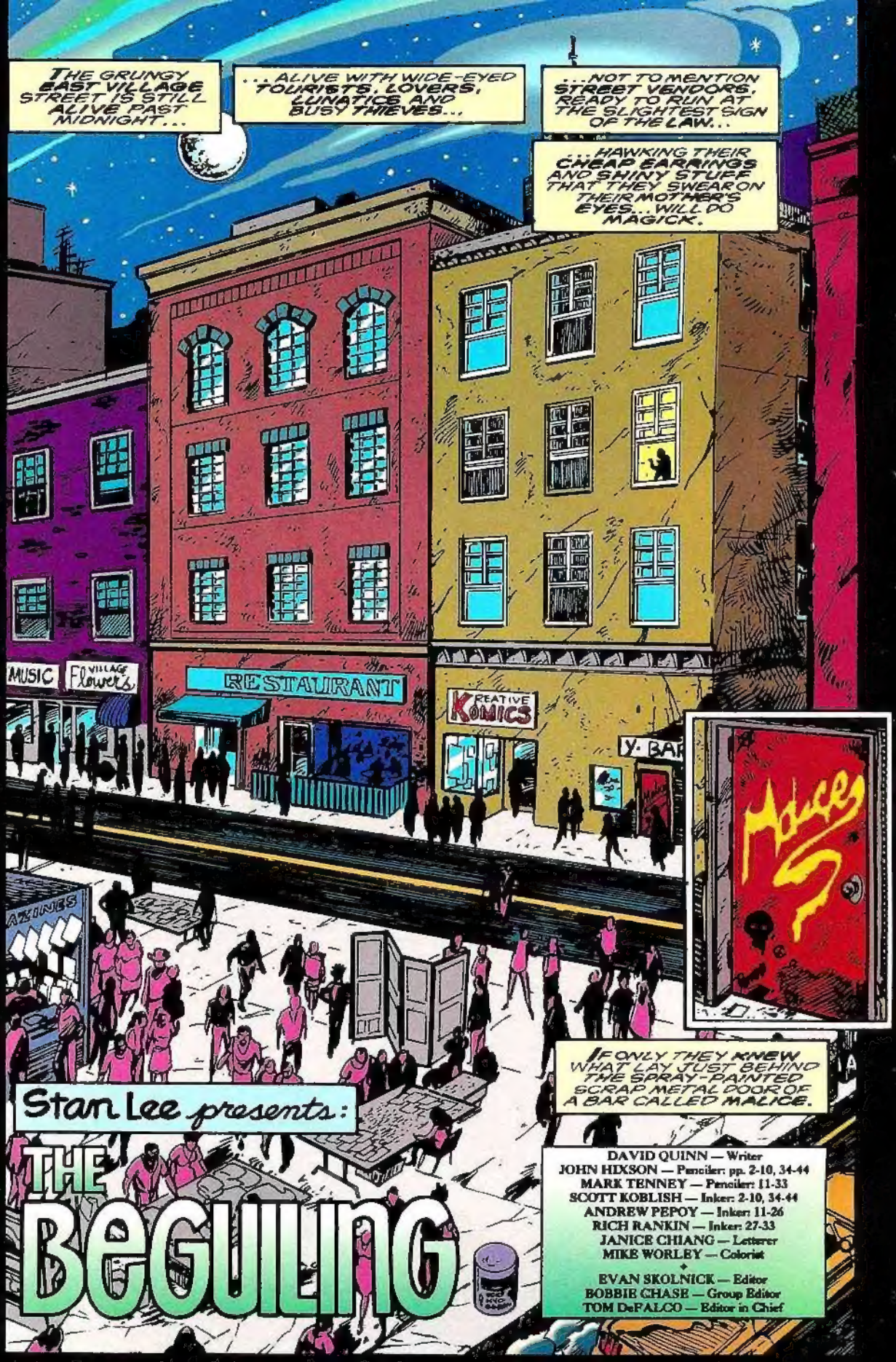
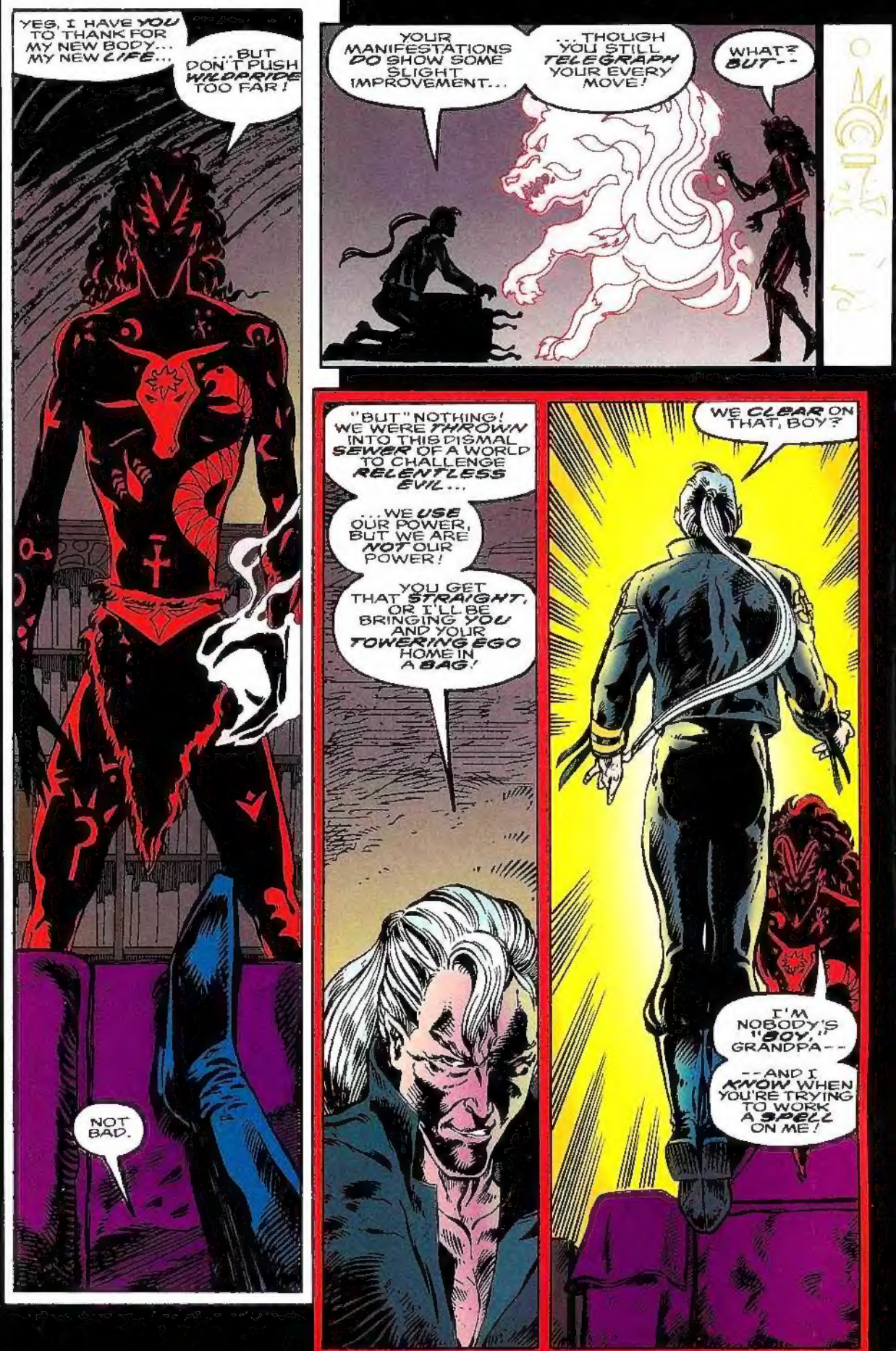

THE GRUNGY EAST VILLAGE STREET IS STILL ALIVE PAST MIDNIGHT...
...ALIVE WITH WIDE-EYED TOURISTS, LOVERS, LUNATICS AND BUSY THIEVES...
...NOT TO MENTION STREET VENDORS, READY TO RUN AT THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF THE LAW...
...HAWKING THEIR CHEAP EARRINGS AND SHINY STUFF THAT THEY SWEAR ON THEIR MOTHER'S EYES...WILL DO MAGICK.
MUSIC
VILLAGE Flowers
RESTAURANT
KREATIVE KOMICS
Malice
IF ONLY THEY KNEW WHAT LAY JUST BEHIND THE SPRAY-PAINTED SCRAP METAL DOOR OF A BAR CALLED MALICE.
Stan Lee presents:
THE BEGUILING

DAVID QUINN — Writer
JOHN HIXSON — Penciler: pp. 2-10, 34-44
MARK TENNEY — Penciler: 11-33
SCOTT KOBLISH — Inker: 2-10, 34-44
ANDREW PEPOY — Inker: 11-26
RICH RANKIN — Inker: 27-33
JANICE CHIANG — Letterer
MIKE WORLEY — Colorist

EVAN SKOLNICK — Editor
BOBBIE CHASE — Group Editor
TOM DeFALCO — Editor in Chief

PAST A MALODOROUS STORAGE AREA LIES A MORPHIC THRESHOLD TO A BACK ROOM THAT EXISTS IN NULL-SPACE-- A ROOM THAT IS YET ISN'T HERE.
ITS CREATOR WAS BORN A PEASANT IN THE SIXTH CENTURY A.D., BUT NOW DECLARES HIMSELF A "GENTLEMAN SORCERER" IN WHAT HE CALLS THE "NEW DARK AGES"...
...A LIVING CONTRADICTION WHO ONCE CONFRONTED MERLIN OF CAMELOT, YET MINGLES IN ANY DOWNTOWN BIKER BAR...
...MOCKED THE MYSTIC!
MY CONFUSED YOUNG FRIEND, YOUR CHOICE LIES BEFORE YOU-- THE PRIMAL FORCES I HAVE AWAKENED IN YOU WERE EVER YOURS...
...BUT PROFOUNDLY DARKER, MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU WERE TOLD!
DO NOT FOLLOW ME OUT OF GRATITUDE FOR RESCUING YOU FROM OBLIVION-- THAT WOULD I DO FOR ANY FELLOW JOURNEYMAN OF THE OLD WAYS.
FOLLOW ME TO FULLY OWN YOUR POWER!
HOWEVER, WHEREVER HE MAY BE NOW, DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE NEVER HAD YOUR INTERESTS AT HEART...
...FOR THE UNPOLISHED REALITY IS, YOU'RE A WALKING MAGICKAL TIME-BOMB, MY DISCIPLE!
OR FOLLOW ME NOT-- THOUGH CHANCES ARE, YOU'LL DESTROY YOURSELF...
...AFTER ALL, EVEN YOUR FORMER MENTOR LEFT YOU FOR DEAD... DIDN'T HE?
NEVER HAVE I PROFESSED TO BE... SAINTLY.
I TOLD YOU BEFORE...

...DON'T CALL ME "DISCIPLE!"
FOR EVEN YOU AREN'T AWARE OF THE FULL POTENTIAL...
...OF MY ANIMAL MAGICK!


YES, I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR MY NEW BODY... MY NEW LIFE...
...BUT DON'T PUSH WILDPRIDE TOO FAR!
NOT BAD.
YOUR MANIFESTATIONS DO SHOW SOME SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT...
...THOUGH YOU STILL TELEGRAPH YOUR EVERY MOVE!
WHAT? BUT--
"BUT" NOTHING! WE WERE THROWN INTO THIS DISMAL SEWER OF A WORLD TO CHALLENGE RELENTLESS EVIL...
...WE USE OUR POWER, BUT WE ARE NOT OUR POWER!
YOU GET THAT STRAIGHT, OR I'LL BE BRINGING YOU AND YOUR TOWERING EGO HOME IN A BAG!
WE CLEAR ON THAT, BOY?
I'M NOBODY'S "BOY", GRANDPA--
--AND I KNOW WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO WORK A SPELL ON ME!

"WORK A SPELL?"
STILL YOU FAIL TO UNDERSTAND.
TO OWN YOUR POWER...
...YOU MUST CONTROL IT UNCONDITIONALLY!
WHAT--
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
YOU CAN'T--
WITHOUT CONTROL, BLUNT FOOL, YOUR POWER MEANS...
...NOTHING!
NO! I CAN'T STOP THEM!

NO... BUT I CAN.
THEN DO IT, HURRY!
THE TABOO MAGICK OF THE DARKHOLD...
...CHTHON'S BOOK OF SINS...
...THIS AND MORE ARE MINE TO CONTROL!
...WHILE YOU CANNOT EVEN CONTROL YOURSELF!
ARRRGGH!
ALL RIGHT...
...YOU THE MAN.
THE DARKNOLD IS NOT ENOUGH-- ALL MAGICK MUST BE MODRED'S..
...FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD.
SO, SCHOOL'S IN. TEACH ME.
BUT ONE OBSTACLE STANDS IN MY--
--IN OUR PATH.
AND THE TIME IS RIGHT TO OBLITERATE THAT OBSTACLE!

BROADWAY!

ABOVE A STAGE SO EMPTY...

...ONE MIGHT HOPE TO WITNESS GHOSTS OF OTHELLO...

...AND THE QUEENS OF BURLESQUE IN FULL SWING!

THE CURRENT "ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE," HOWEVER, CARES NOTHING FOR THEATER HISTORY.

SHE LECTURES HERE WHEN NECESSARY, APPEARING AS A HUMAN SCHOLAR OF THE OLD WAYS...

...THEN, SHE RETIRES TO HER FETID NEST IN THE LIGHTNING GRID, RELAXING INTO HER TRUE FORM.

SHE IS THE ELEMENTAL DANCER SALOMÉ...

...SORCERESS SUPREME!*

ALONE AT LAST...TO APPLY MY NECROMANCY!

REVEAL, DRIED FLESH, UNCOVER THE HIDDEN REFUGE OF THE ONLY MAN...

...WHOEVER DEFIED ME AND LIVED--

--DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE!

MY FRAUDULENT PREDECESSOR STILL BLUDGES ME...

...BUT THIS IS...LUSCIOUSLY INTRIGUING...

*SALOMÉ WRESTED THE TITLE FROM DOCTOR STRANGE IN ISSUE #61 OF DOCTOR STRANGE! --EVAN

"--OUTSIDE MY THEATER-- HOW CAN IT BE?

"ENGAGING MY HUMAN SLAVES IN BLOODY COMBAT...

"...ARE TWO OF STRANGE'S PETS:

"MORBIUS, THE SCIENTIFIC VAMPIRE...

"...AND JACK RUSSELL...A WEREWOLF!"

BR FA URSELF. ST

COMING SOON TO A T TER NE

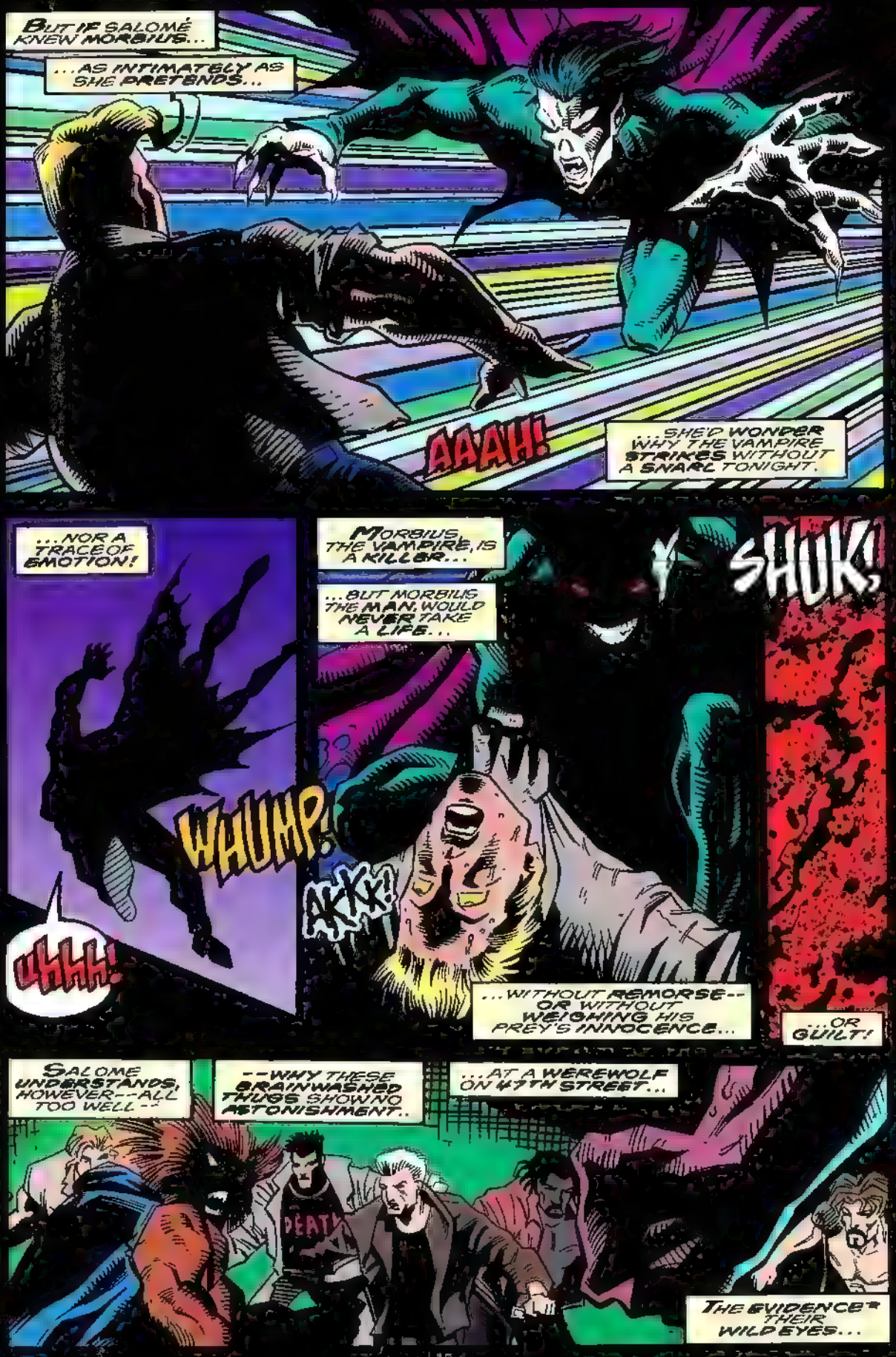
FEAR

I KEPT THESE MIDNIGHT SONS IN MIND...

...POTENTIAL WEAPONS TO USE AGAINST YOU, STEPHEN.

BUT CAN YOU HAVE BEEN SO FOOLISH AS TO SEND THEM AGAINST ME HERE IN MY SANCTUM...

...WHEN YOU KNOW THEY COULD LEAD ME BACK TO YOU?


BUT IF SALOMÉ KNEW MORBIUS...
...AS INTIMATELY AS SHE PRETENDS...
AAAH!
...SHE'D WONDER WHY THE VAMPIRE STRIKES WITHOUT A SNARL TONIGHT.
...NOR A TRACE OF EMOTION!
MORBIUS, THE VAMPIRE, IS A KILLER...
...BUT MORBIUS THE MAN, WOULD NEVER TAKE A LIFE...
SHUK!
WHUMP!
AKK!
UHHH!
...WITHOUT REMORSE-- OR WITHOUT WEIGHING HIS PREY'S INNOCENCE...
...OR GUILT!
SALOME UNDERSTANDS, HOWEVER--ALL TOO WELL--
--WHY THESE BRAINWASHED THUGS SHOW NO ASTONISHMENT..
...AT A WEREWOLF ON 47TH STREET...
DEATH
THE EVIDENCE* THEIR WILD EYES...

...AND THE SWEAT OF A FEVER...

...IN THIS BONE-DEEP WINTER CHILL!

RRRRAUGH!

UGGH!

ARRH!

CHILLS OF ANOTHER SORT SHOOT DOWN SALOME'S SPINE, HOWEVER.

FOR THE FRENZY OF PAIN WITHIN HER ENTRANCED FOLLOWERS...

...IS HER BLISS!

DISTRACTED, SHE FAILS TO REALIZE...

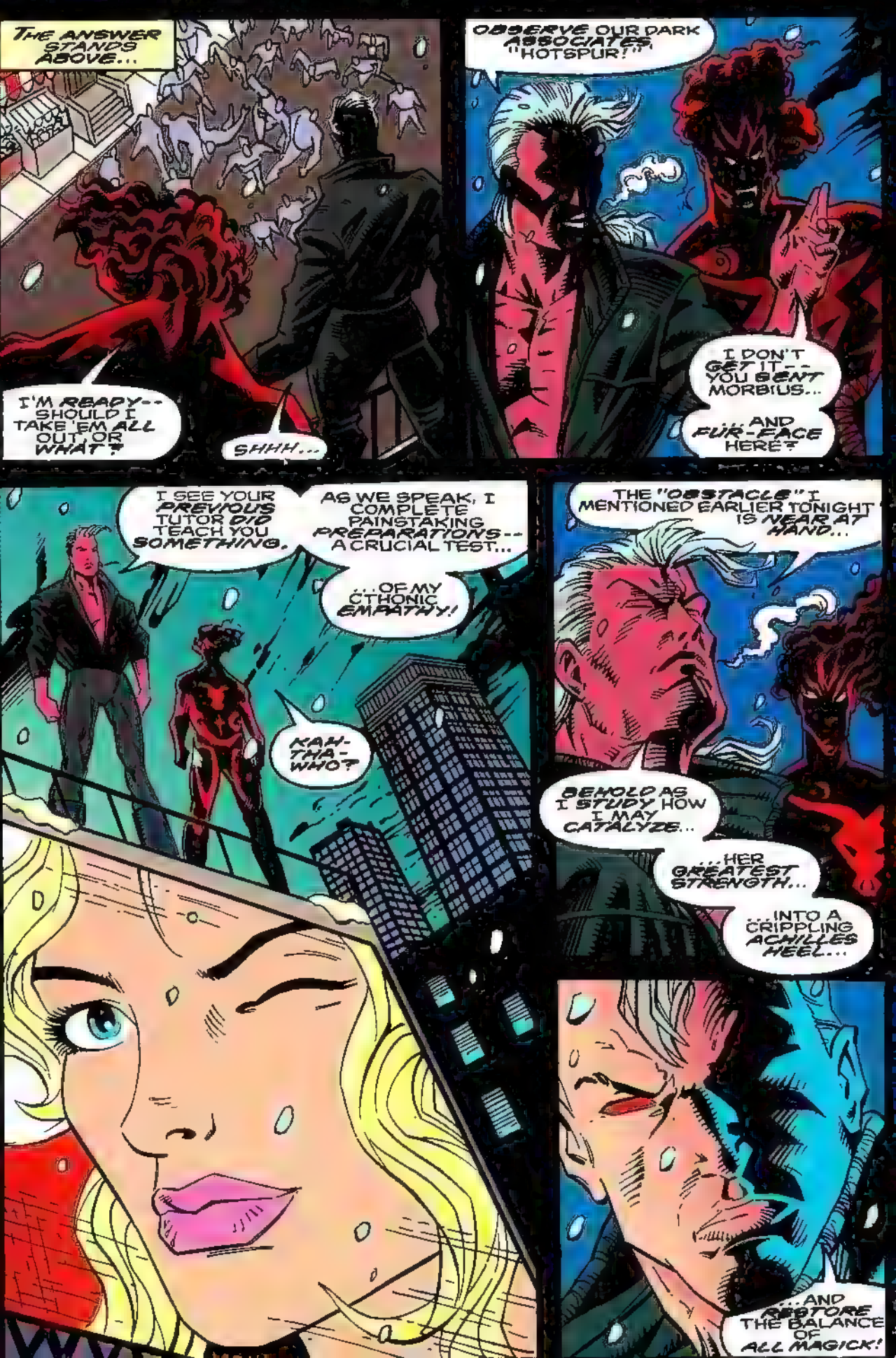
...THOUGH THE FULL MOON IS WEEKS AWAY...

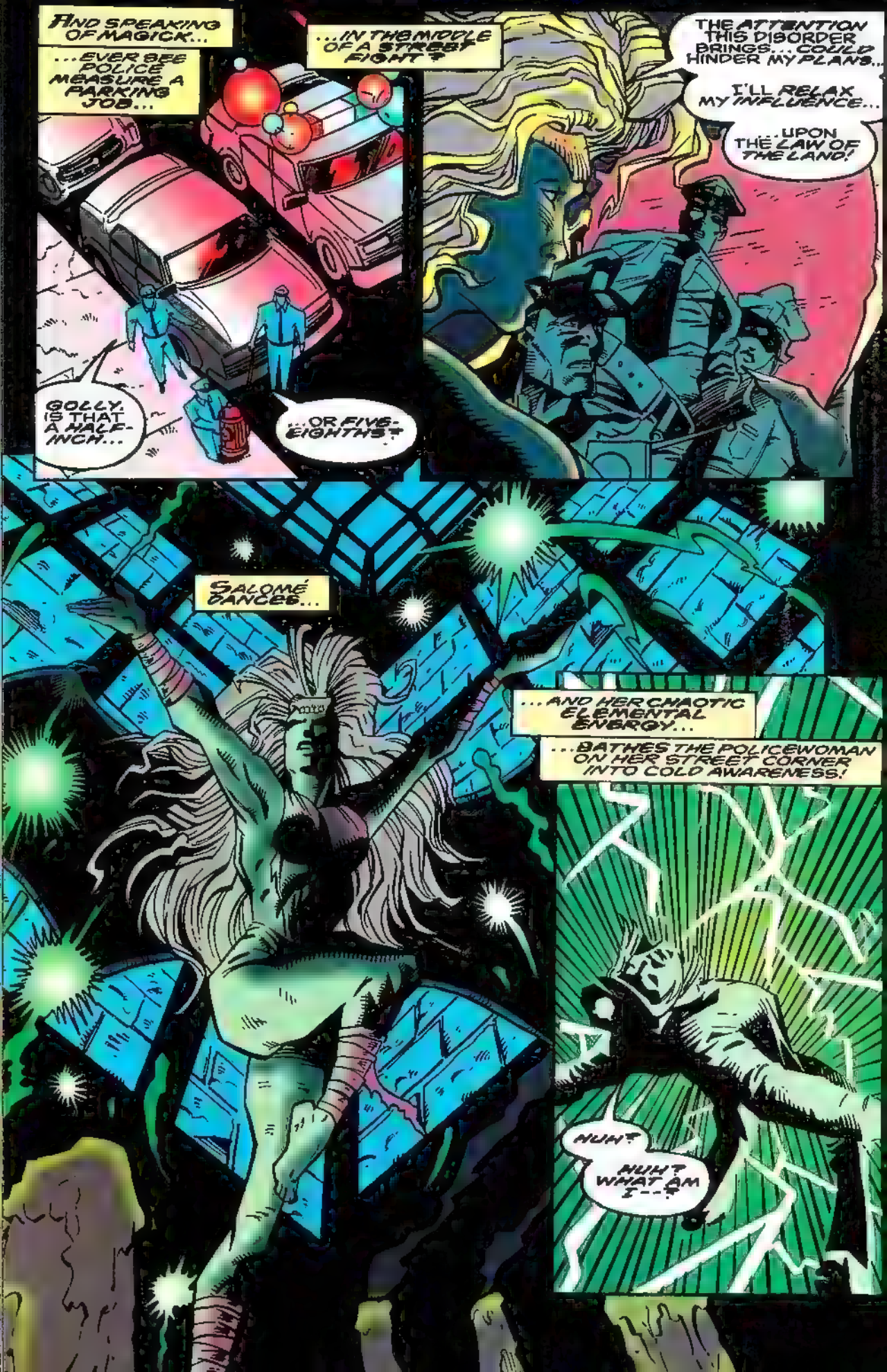
...THE WEREWOLF SOMEHOW HAS NOT RETAINED THE HUMAN INTELLECT...AND EMOTIONS...

...OF JACK RUSSELL!

HOW?

RRRRAUGH!


THE ANSWER STANDS ABOVE...
I'M READY-- SHOULD I TAKE 'EM ALL OUT OR WHAT?
SHHH...
OBSERVE OUR DARK ASSOCIATES, "HOTSPUR!"
I DON'T GET IT-- YOU SENT MORBIUS... AND FUR-FACE HERE?
I SEE YOUR PREVIOUS TUTOR DID TEACH YOU SOMETHING.
AS WE SPEAK, I COMPLETE PAINSTAKING PREPARATIONS-- A CRUCIAL TEST...
...OF MY CTHONIC EMPATHY!
KAH-THA- WHO?
THE "OBSTACLE" I MENTIONED EARLIER TONIGHT IS NEAR AT HAND...
BEHOLD AS I STUDY HOW I MAY CATALYZE...
...HER GREATEST STRENGTH...
...INTO A CRIPPLING ACHILLES HEEL...
...AND RESTORE THE BALANCE OF ALL MAGICK!


AND SPEAKING OF MAGICK...
...EVER SEE POLICE MEASURE A PARKING JOB...
...IN THE MIDDLE OF A STREET FIGHT?
GOLLY, IS THAT A HALF-INCH...
...OR FIVE-EIGHTHS?
THE ATTENTION THIS DISORDER BRINGS... COULD HINDER MY PLANS...
I'LL RELAX MY INFLUENCE...
...UPON THE LAW OF THE LAND!
SALOMÉ DANCES...
...AND HER CHAOTIC ELEMENTAL ENERGY...
...BATHES THE POLICEWOMAN ON HER STREET CORNER INTO COLD AWARENESS!
HUH?
HUH? WHAT AM I--?

OOOH...

...FEEL LIKE I JUS' *SLEPT* FR A *WEEK!*

YO!

WE GOT A *TROUBLE*, HERE!

OLIVIA'S BOD

UHH...

...GOTTA *REPORT*...

THAT'S WHAT I *SAID*...

...WE JUST SEEMED TO *WAKE UP* IN THE MIDDLE OF A *RIOT!*

OH, *GREAT*. WE GOT A *TV CREW* HERE, TOO.

...SO THAT *BACK-UP* BETTER BE HERE *FAST*...

...AND WATCH WHO THEY DROP!

THE PRECINCT...

LIEUTENANT MICHAEL BADALINO GRINDS HIS GEARS IN CONVENTIONAL POLICE PROCEDURES.

DR. STRANGE-- YOU LEFT US A *MESS!* MY *SEARCH* SHOWS *SOMEONE* BOUGHT THE LOT THAT *USETA* BE YOUR *OLD* [redacted] *STREET* ADDRESS...

...*AND* THERE'S *HEAVY ACTION* ALL *OVER* YOUR *ACCOUNTS*... BUT I CAN'T *TRACE--*

CITY MAP

UNIT 47, THIS IS *DISPATCH*... PLEASE REPEAT... DID YOU SAY...

WEREWOLF VAMPIRE?

THIS AIN'T JUST THE *BLUE MOON.*

...*A VAMPIRE* AN' *A WEREWOLF* MIXIN' IT UP ON *FORTY-SEVENTH STREET?!*

GOTTA BE THE *MYSTERY DOC* PLAYIN' *FOOTSIE* WITH HIS *SIDESHOW FREAKS* AGAIN... WHICH MEANS..

"... I GOTTA GET *INTO* THIS!"

BAR

OPEN

AND A FLASHING TRANSFORMATION LATER...

... TWO LATE-NIGHT SPORTS FANS NEGOTIATE A DIFFICULT CURB...

...ONLY TO FIND THEY'VE GOOD REASON...

...TO SPRINT BACK TO THE GARBAGE-STREWN SIDEWALK!

DROP THOSE *KEYS* IF YOU *GOT* 'EM, BOYS...

...'CAUSE *VENGEANCE* DOESN'T LIKE *DRUNKS* ON *HIS* STREETS!

RRRRRMMMM!

huggh... SHOULDN'T HAVE...

...HAD THAT LAST *hurrrrgh!*

GIMMEABREAK! THAT WAS *BOBBY DONIRO* SHOOTIN' A *MOVIE*, TALKIN' TO US!

IT *HADDA* BE!

TIMES SQUARE!
THE MASSACRE CONTINUES OUTSIDE THE THEATER...
...AND NEW YORK'S FINEST--ALERT AND AWAKE--FINALLY ARRIVE...
...TO KEEP THE PEACE!
CHK CHKK
POLICE
M IS FOR MORBIUS...
WHAT ARE YOU STOPPIN' FOR?
DO IT! IF I DIE FOR THE GODDESS--
NO!
--I'LL LIVE FOREVER!
WHAT...AM I DOING?
HOW DID I GET HERE?
JACK!
JACK RUSSELL! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
GRRRR
YOU BLEW IT, PROFESSOR!
CHECK THE VAMPIRE...
THINKING AND FEELING FOR HIMSELF AGAIN!

BECAUSE MODRED ALLOWS IT! MY TEST IS COMPLETE...
I HAVE ALL I NEED TO HUMILIATE SALOME...
...DISCIPLE.
YOU MEAN WE HAVE ALL WE NEED...SO LET'S DO IT!

MODRED GESTURES, IGNORING WILDPRIDE...

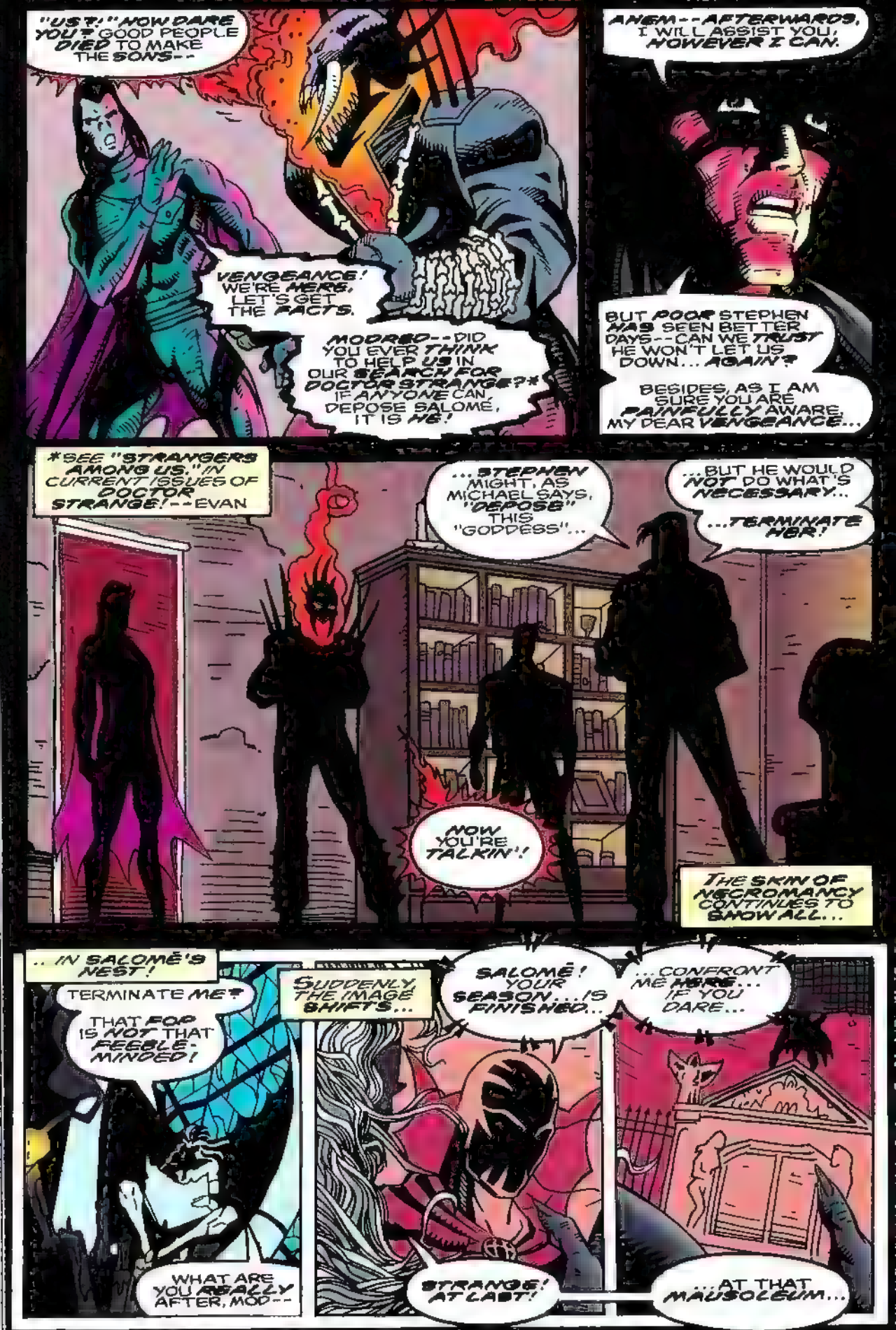
THIS WAS NOT OUR BATTLE, JACK...
--AND I THINK OUR RESOURCES WILL BE BETTER SPENT TRYING TO FIND THE ONE WHO--
RRRR!
GET 'EM!
HER ENEMIES MUST NOT SURVIVE!
TEAR 'EM!

--CAUSED THIS?!
HSSST!

THAT WAS MORBIUS AND THE WEREWOLF, ALL RIGHT-- BUT THEY DISAPPEARED-- LOOKING AS SURPRISED...
...AS THE LOWLIFE MOOKS THEY WERE FIGHTING!
THAT LEAVES TWO QUESTIONS-- WHAT'S GOING ON?
AND WHO DO I HAVE TO HURT?
SCREEEE
MMMMM... VENGEANCE AS WELL? WELL, THE MORE MOTLEY FODDER...
...THE BETTER MY CHANCES!
YOU--ON THE BIKE!
FREEZE!
SORRY, BOYS. NO TIME FOR PROCEDURES--
RMMM
--WHAT THE H--?
IN THE ACTION TV VAN...
WHA--?
I CHECKED THAT EQUIPMENT, GINA, I SWEAR!
OKAY-- THEN TELL ME HOW WE TAPED THAT ENTIRE RAMPAGE...
...AND ENDED UP WITH PLAYBACK OF A TIMES SQUARE TRAFFIC JAM?

GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS, MY BROTHERS!
I TRUST YOUR JUMP THROUGH MY MORPHIC THRESHOLD...
...DID NOT UNSETTLE YOUR DELICATE SENSIBILITIES!
MODRED! COME ON DOWN FROM THERE AND EXPLAIN YOURSELF, OR I'LL TEAR YA DOWN!
WE WON'T STAND YOUR ABUSE, MAGICIAN...
...WE ARE NOT YOUR CHESS PIECES!
IF YOU NEED OUR HELP YOU WILL ASK FOR IT!
I CAN'T CONTROL TH' WOLF ANY MORE!
IT'S HORRIBLE... I WAS KILLING... AN' LOVING IT!
MORB-- CHAIN ME UP OR SOMETHING!
OH, HE ASKED FOR IT, ALL RIGHT!
TIME TO...
...COOL OFF...
...MATCH-STICK MAN!
EASY... I'LL EXPLAIN, JACK...
...AS SOON AS I UNDERSTAND.

MODRED!
WE DEMAND THAT YOU RETURN US TO OUR OWN AFFAIRS!
MICHAEL, THE MANNER IN WHICH I... HANDLED YOU WAS REGRETTABLE...
...BUT I WAS ONLY THINKING OF THE GREATER GOOD OF ALL. THE WHOLE WORLD DESPISES US FOR WHAT WE ARE...
...WE WHO ARE THE ONLY ONES STRIVING TO HOLD BACK A DARKNESS GREATER...
...THAN OUR OWN BOTTOMLESS NIGHTMARES.
YOU'VE NOTICED HOW POWERFUL THIS SALOME IS GETTING... hmmmm?
ALL RIGHT, GLAMOR BOY--WE'RE LISTENING.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME? TO US?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
AND WHO IS YOUR FRIEND IN THE SHADOWS?
GENTLEMEN--AND VENGEANCE--MAY I PRESENT MY DISCIPLE... WILDRIDE!
AS FOR YOUR BURNING QUESTIONS, MR RUSSELL...
...I'M AFRAID YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
I HAD ONLY ENOUGH TIME TO TEST THE MAGICK WE WILL NEED IN THE FIELD TODAY!
AND TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. SALOME MUST BE STOPPED. NOW.
AND A SORCERER SUPREME, YOU MUST AGREE.
...SHOULD BE ONE OF THE MIDNIGHT SONS...ONE OF US!


"JUST!" HOW DARE YOU? GOOD PEOPLE DIED TO MAKE THE SONS--
VENGEANCE! WE'RE HERE. LET'S GET THE FACTS.
MODRED--DID YOU EVER THINK TO HELP US IN OUR SEARCH FOR DOCTOR STRANGE?* IF ANYONE CAN DEPOSE SALOME, IT IS HE!
AHEM--AFTERWARDS, I WILL ASSIST YOU, HOWEVER I CAN.
BUT POOR STEPHEN HAS SEEN BETTER DAYS--CAN WE TRUST HE WON'T LET US DOWN... AGAIN?
BESIDES, AS I AM SURE YOU ARE PAINFULLY AWARE, MY DEAR VENGEANCE...
*SEE "STRANGERS AMONG US," IN CURRENT ISSUES OF DOCTOR STRANGE!--EVAN
...STEPHEN MIGHT, AS MICHAEL SAYS, "DEPOSE" THIS "GODDESS"...
...BUT HE WOULD NOT DO WHAT'S NECESSARY...
...TERMINATE HER!
NOW YOU'RE TALKIN'!
THE SKIN OF NECROMANCY CONTINUES TO SHOW ALL...
...IN SALOMÉ'S NEST!
TERMINATE ME?
THAT FOP IS NOT THAT FEEBLE-MINDED!
WHAT ARE YOU REALLY AFTER, MOD--
SUDDENLY, THE IMAGE SHIFTS...
SALOMÉ! YOUR SEASON...IS FINISHED...
STRANGE! AT LAST!
...CONFRONT ME HERE... IF YOU DARE...
...AT THAT MAUSOLEUM...

"...IN CYPRESS HILLS CEMETERY!"

HAVE A *LITTLE RESPECT*, MODRED...

...YOU EXPECT US TO *LEAP INTO THE FRAY* WITHOUT *COGNIZANCE* OF YOUR *PLAN*?

GIMME THE FRAY, I'LL LEAP!

INDEED, AT MODRED'S COMMAND, THE CAPED PHANTASM TURNS TO BLUE-BLACK ASHES...

...WHICH MINGLE WITH THE SNOW IN A MYSTIC *SPIRAL*!

crud!

NOW, WILDPRIDE! HERE SHE COMES!

RRRARGH!

Uhhh... THE *CHANGE*-- IT'S-- *COMIN'*--

OH, *MORBIUS*, WHERE'S YOUR SENSE OF *SPONTANEITY*? *LISTEN*, MY BROTHERS-IN-ARMS-- UNLESS I HAVE *MISJUDGED* OUR ENEMY...

...MY *ILLUSION* OF *STRANGE'S DEFIANTLY MASKED FACE*...

...OUGHT TO BRING A *DRAMATIC* CHANGE IN THE *WEATHER*!

MODRED, YOU ARROGANT FOOL!

WE'RE NOT YET PREPARED TO FACE--

YES, YOU ARE!

I AM PREPARED... TO EXPLOIT HER ONLY WEAKNESS!

KROOM

YOU ARE MODRED, ARE YOU NOT? SOMETIMES CONFUSED WITH ANOTHER MARGINAL MAGE FROM OBSCURITY, ONE NAMED MERLINT

SALOMÉ REGISTERED YOUR STRANGE AS A COUNTERFEIT, NEOPHYTE...

...A SORCERESS SUPREME MUST KNOW ALL!

THAT VANITY WILL BE THE DEATH OF YOU, WOMAN!

AHHH... AND MY STORM IS NOW YOURS, MODRED...

...WILL YOU DANCE?

HAHAHA!

KROOM

AHHHHH!

WILDRIDE! DISSOLVE YOUR FIRE-BEAST!

CONTROL! CONTROL!

Whoa!

AND MODRED MANIFESTS MIRACLES...

WE WAR AGAINST TIME!

HOW LONG CAN I CONTROL...

NO! I AM MODRED!

...LIKE THIS, HIS MADNESS RENT!

WILDPRIDE--

PREPARE YOURSELF!

VENGEANCE--NORMAL LAWS OF COSMOLOGY GET BENT IN MY NULL-SPACE!

AS SALOMÉ'S STORM DIFFUSES, YOU AND MORBIUS CAN OUT-MANEUVER IT EASILY!

OH. RIGHT. OF COURSE WE CAN.

AND, AT LAST I MAY REVEAL THE PLAN--I AM DAMPENING ALL OF YOUR EMOTIONS, PARTICULARLY THE VIOLENT ENERGY...

...OF FEAR, LOATHING, AND HATRED...

...THAT SALOMÉ DEPENDS ON AS THE WEAKEST ADDICT NEEDS HER DRUG!

OUR ENEMY CAN FIGHT, BUT ONLY WITH THE "CHARGE" HAD WHEN SHE CAME HERE--AND SHE CANNOT ESCAPE!

NO!

WHAT?

STRIKE NOW! SHE IS OURS!

WHAT IS *THIS?* THE ILLUSTRIOUS *MIDNIGHT SONS...*

...*FIGHTING* AS A *COHESIVE ENSEMBLE?*

THIS OUGHT TO *LAST* FOR A *MOMENT* OR TWO... *HAHAHA!*

KKRRARGH!

THINK YOU'RE *CUTE,* *DON'T* CHA, SALLY? YOU CAN *DANCE* ALL YOU WANT...

...TO THE TUNE OF *HELLFIRE!*

WILDRIDE! YOUR LION, NOW!

AIIIEE!

THE REST OF YOU... *DO* WHAT *DOCTOR STRANGE* COULDN'T... *TAKE HER!*

GIVE ME...A SECOND...

OUR MOST SPURS THIS WILDPRIDE ON TO GREAT SAVAGERY...

...AND THE NEW PLAYER SEEMS UNSTABLE UNDER THE PRESSURE!

NOW, DISCIPLE!

NOT BAD, KID...

AUUHHH!

GRRRR!

...BUT WHEN I REALLY WANNA PUT A BEAST IN SOME WITCH'S FACE...

...I JUS' GRAB SOMETHIN' WILD...

GRRRAUGH!

...AND GIVE IT A HURL!

HSSSSS!
FRRAKK!
FRRAKK!
SALOMÉ DANCES...
...BUT THE WEREWOLF IS TOO COLDLY SAVAGE TO FEEL THE PAIN!
IT'S TRUE!
I CAN'T TOUCH... YOUR EMOTIONS!
I'M GROWING... WEAK!
THE WEREWOLF RAGES...
...BUT HE'S A KILLING MACHINE WITHOUT JACK RUSSELL'S SPIRIT!
MODRED!
RUSSELL'S AS LIKELY TO DESTROY HIMSELF AS SALOMÉ!
FRRAKK!
THE LYCANTHROPE KNOWS ONLY TO SCRATCH AND SPIT...
.. HE CAN'T THINK TO MERELY HOLD HER...

MORBIUS IS CORRECT--SALOMÉ HAS ENOUGH FORCE LEFT TO FREE HERSELF FROM THE MINDLESS MONSTER!

RRRRRARGH!

LOOK OUT, WOLF--UHHH!

...SO WE CAN FINISH HER!

JACK! YOU HAVE TO HEAR ME!

PERHAPS A RESULT OF MORBIUS'S LOUD PROTESTS...

...OR FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN, MOORED NEGLECTS WILDPRIDE, WHO COCKS HIS DUSKY HEAD TO STUDY HIS "MASTER" CAREFULLY.

AND NOW, SALOME...

...FOR OUR FINALE... SOMETHING...

...IN WHITE...

...WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, I THINK!

PRETTY, PRETTY... ECTOPLASMIC WINGS...

...OH, ARROGANT ANGEL...

...YOU MAY STILL BE HEADING FOR A FALL!

HA! YOUR ELEMENTAL FORCE *SHRINKS* BEFORE *MY POWER* LIKE A *DYING FLOWER!*

THAT'S IT, STUPID *WITCH*--HOLD IT *RIGHT THERE!*

NO!

FHOOM

ARRRRGH!

TWO POINTS! THAT SHOULD DO IT!

I FEEL... SO... *WEAK...*

SORCERER... *TELL ME...* WHAT DO YOU WANT...

PLEASE...

FEED... ME... *EMOTIONS...* I NEED... AND I...

...WILL DO *ANYTHING!*

WOMAN...

...WE *EXPECTED BETTER* FROM A SORCERESS *SUPREME!*

WHY, I'M NOT EVEN *PERSPIRING.*

VERY WELL, *SALOMÉ...*

I SHALL GRANT YOU THE FULL EMOTIONAL FORCE OF THESE MIDNIGHT SONS...

...WHEN YOU HAVE HELPED ME TO FIND AND EXECUTE...

...STEPHEN STRANGE!

MODRED, YOU TWO-FACED LIAR!

YOU'RE GONNA BURN!

Umngh!

WUMP

IDIOT! THAT IS ALL YOU CARE ABOUT?

YOU WASTED MY TIME--AND ALL YOU DESIRE...

...IS THAT WHICH I HAVE ALREADY PLANNED TO CARRY OUT!

AHH! MY EYES!

SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO BALOMB, UNWORTHY ONE...

...AND PERHAPS SHE WILL LET YOU SERVE HER!

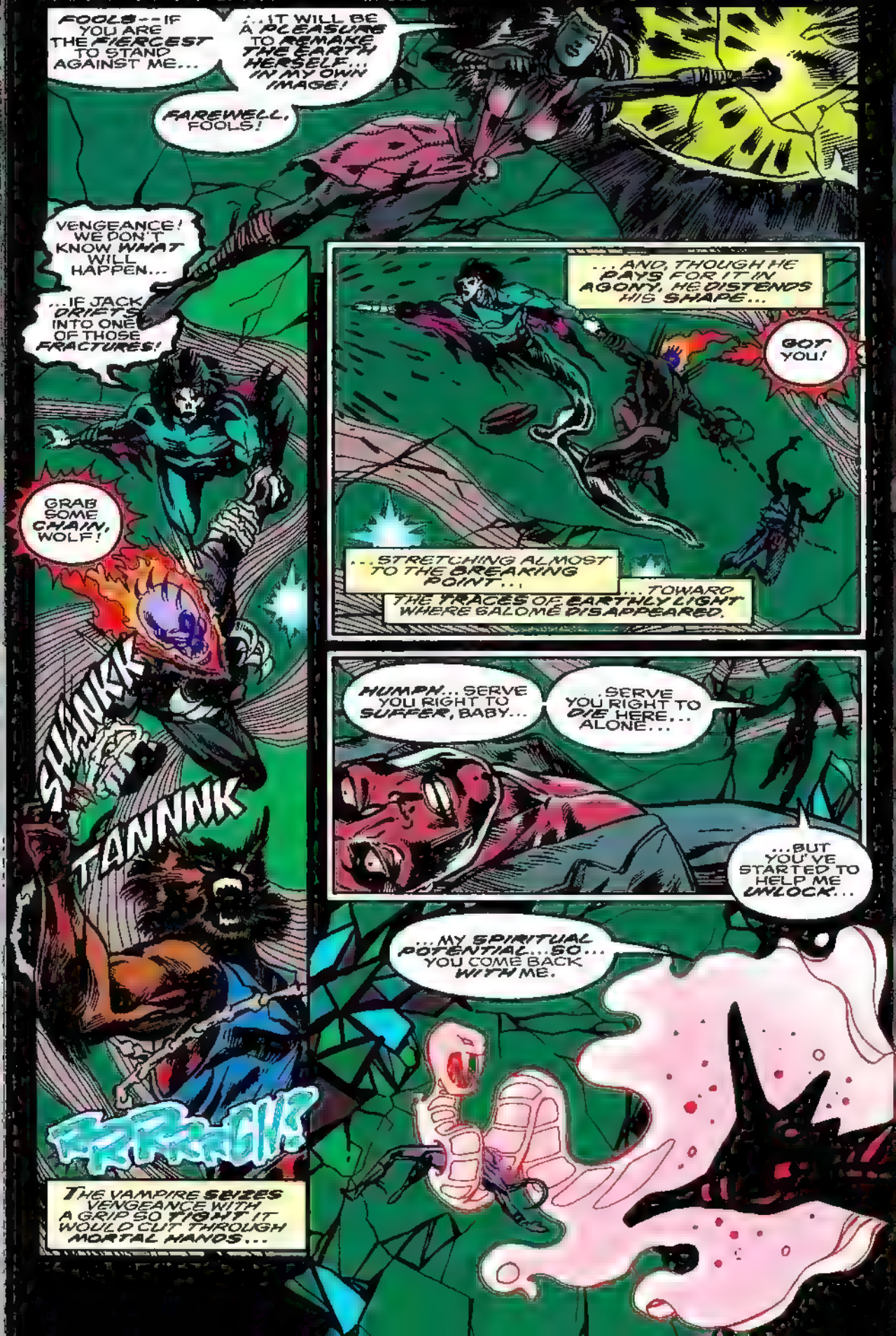
MODRED'S UNCONSCIOUS, SPINNING AWAY LIKE A LOST KITE!

NO! UNHHH!

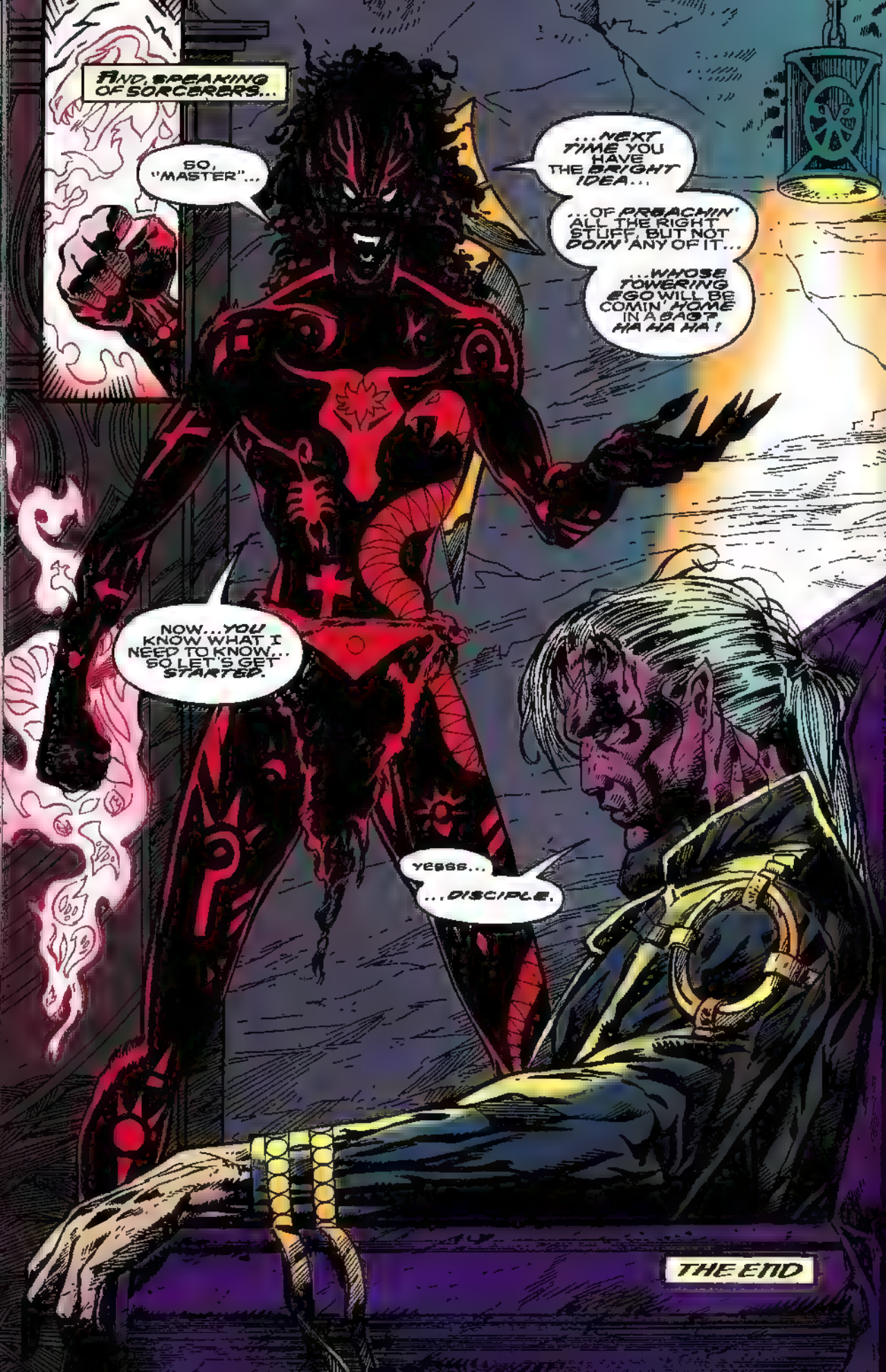
...AND THIS MADNESS RENT HE CREATED...

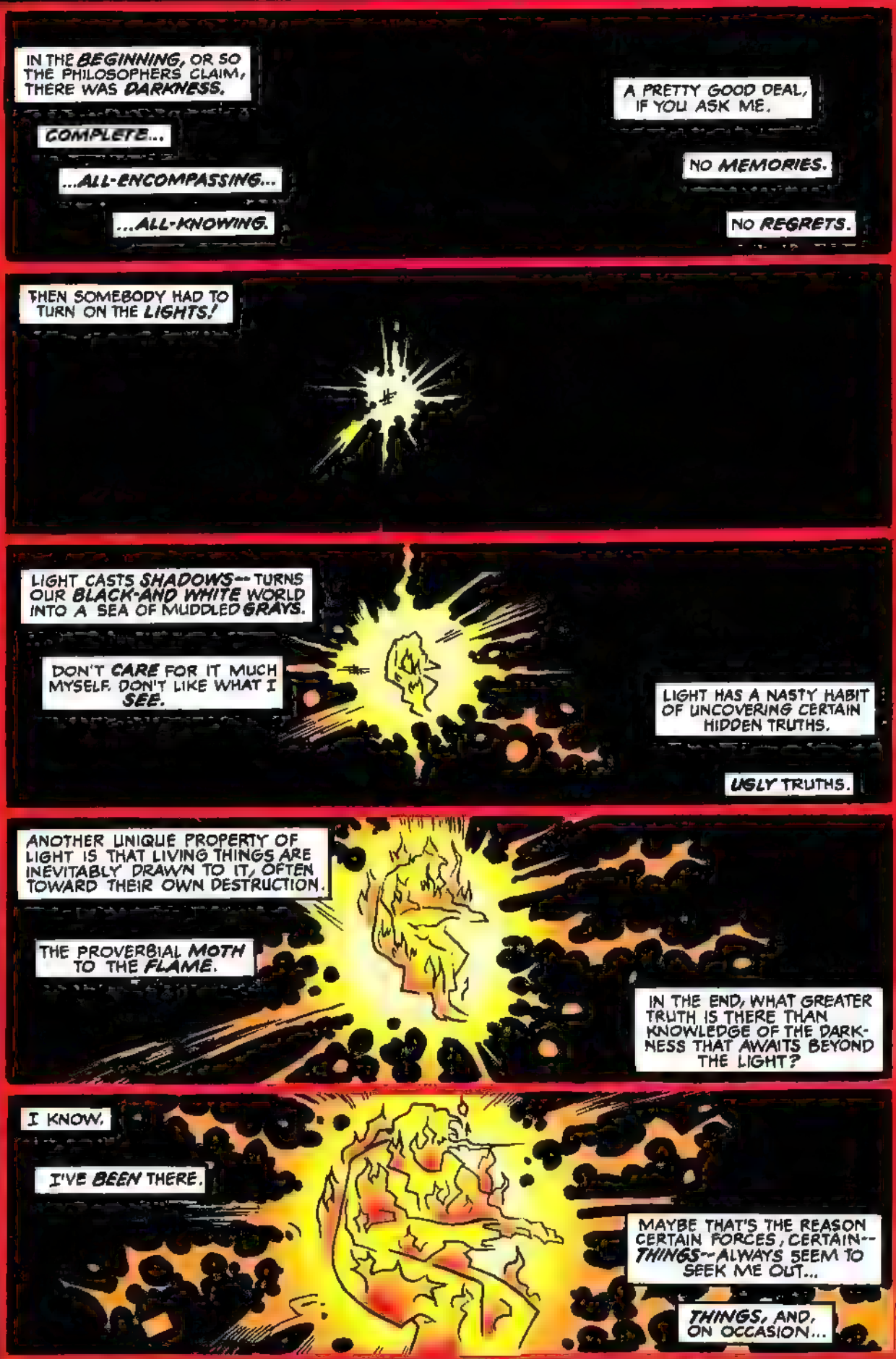
...IT'S BREAKING APART...

...REVEALING BETWEEN THE CRACKS, UTTER NOTHINGNESS!


FOOLS--IF YOU ARE THE FIERCEST TO STAND AGAINST ME...
...IT WILL BE A PLEASURE TO REMAKE THE EARTH HERSELF... IN MY OWN IMAGE!
FAREWELL, FOOLS!
VENGEANCE! WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN...
...IF JACK DRIFTS INTO ONE OF THOSE FRACTURES!
GRAB SOME CHAIN, WOLF!
SHANKK
TANNNK
FRRRRCH!
THE VAMPIRE SEIZES VENGEANCE WITH A GRIP SO TIGHT IT WOULD CUT THROUGH MORTAL HANDS...
...AND, THOUGH HE DAYS FOR IT IN AGONY, HE DISTENDS HIS SHAPE...
GOT YOU!
...STRETCHING ALMOST TO THE BREAKING POINT...
...TOWARD THE TRACES OF EARTHLY LIGHT WHERE SALOMÉ DISAPPEARED.
HUMPH... SERVE YOU RIGHT TO SUFFER, BABY...
...SERVE YOU RIGHT TO DIE HERE... ALONE...
...BUT YOU'VE STARTED TO HELP ME UNLOCK...
...MY SPIRITUAL POTENTIAL...SO... YOU COME BACK WITH ME.

FUMP!
FUH-FUHMMP!
MODRED! I'M GONNA MAKE THAT LITTLE WIMP CHEW OFF A PIECE OF HIS OWN LYING TONGUE...
...AND EAT IT RAW!
NOT AGAIN...
MORBS.. WHERE AM I THIS TIME?
I HAVE A VAGUE MEMORY . BUT IF IT'S TRUE... THINGS ARE GETTING TOTALLY OUT OF HAND!
I THOUGHT THE CONCEPT OF YOU GUYS DOING THE MIDNIGHT SONS THING WAS TO BUILD POWER ON TRUST.
MODRED... MUST HAVE BUILT SOME KIND OF...
...EMERGENCY BACK-OUT INTO HIS RIFT...
--TO PUMP US HERE--HE AND HIS ODD NEW PROTEGE ARE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND!
MODRED WAS NEVER ONE OF OUR ALLIANCE, JACK.
TONIGHT WE LEARNED HE NEVER WILL BE!
BUT WATCHING MODRED'S BITTER ANTIPATHY TOWARD STEPHEN STRANGE...
...REMINDS ME THAT OUR BUSINESS WITH THE FORMER SORCERER SUPREME REMAINS... UNFINISHED.


AND, SPEAKING OF SORCERERS...
SO, "MASTER"...
...NEXT TIME YOU HAVE THE BRIGHT IDEA...
...OF PREACHIN' ALL THE RIGHT STUFF, BUT NOT DOIN' ANY OF IT...
...WHOSE TOWERING EGO WILL BE COMIN' HOME IN A BAG? HA HA HA!
NOW...YOU KNOW WHAT I NEED TO KNOW... SO LET'S GET STARTED.
YESSS...
...DISCIPLE.
THE END


IN THE BEGINNING, OR SO THE PHILOSOPHERS CLAIM, THERE WAS DARKNESS.
COMPLETE...
...ALL-ENCOMPASSING...
...ALL-KNOWING.
A PRETTY GOOD DEAL, IF YOU ASK ME.
NO MEMORIES.
NO REGRETS.
THEN SOMEBODY HAD TO TURN ON THE LIGHTS!
LIGHT CASTS SHADOWS-- TURNS OUR BLACK-AND WHITE WORLD INTO A SEA OF MUDDLED GRAYS.
DON'T CARE FOR IT MUCH MYSELF. DON'T LIKE WHAT I SEE.
LIGHT HAS A NASTY HABIT OF UNCOVERING CERTAIN HIDDEN TRUTHS.
UGLY TRUTHS.
ANOTHER UNIQUE PROPERTY OF LIGHT IS THAT LIVING THINGS ARE INEVITABLY DRAWN TO IT, OFTEN TOWARD THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION.
THE PROVERBIAL MOTH TO THE FLAME.
IN THE END, WHAT GREATER TRUTH IS THERE THAN KNOWLEDGE OF THE DARKNESS THAT AWAITS BEYOND THE LIGHT?
I KNOW.
I'VE BEEN THERE.
MAYBE THAT'S THE REASON CERTAIN FORCES, CERTAIN-- THINGS--ALWAYS SEEM TO SEEK ME OUT...
THINGS, AND, ON OCCASION...

...PEOPLE.

I KNEW HOW IT WOULD END BEFORE SHE EVEN SPOKE...

PHIZZ

THE WAY IT *ALWAYS* ENDS...

EXCUSE ME, *MISTER?*

I--I NEED TO *TALK* TO YOU.

KINDRED SPIRITS, LOST SOULS

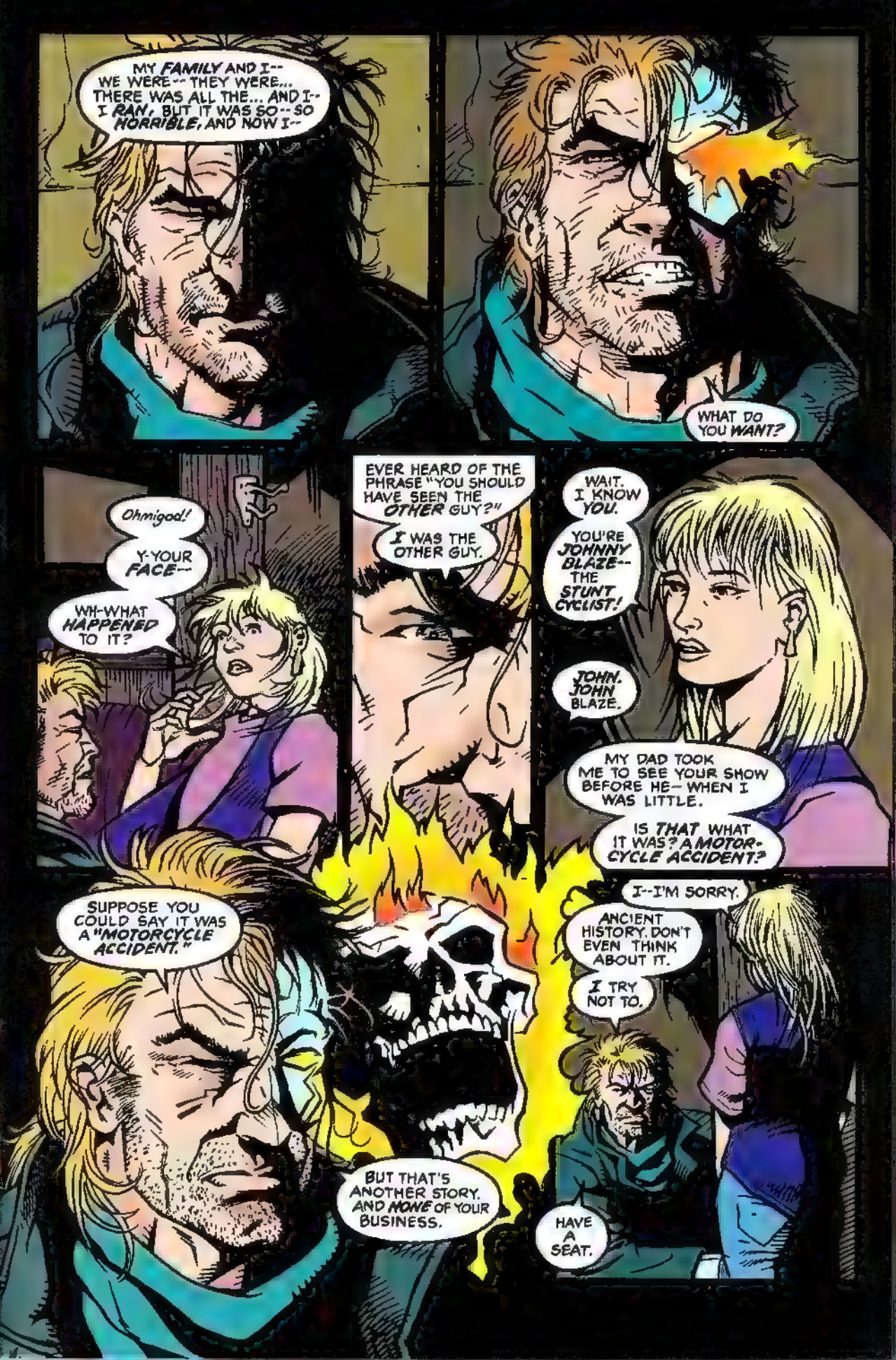
TOM BREVOORT AND *MIKE KANTEROVICH*
WRITERS

JOHN BRIDGES
PENCILER

MAX DOUGLAS
INKER

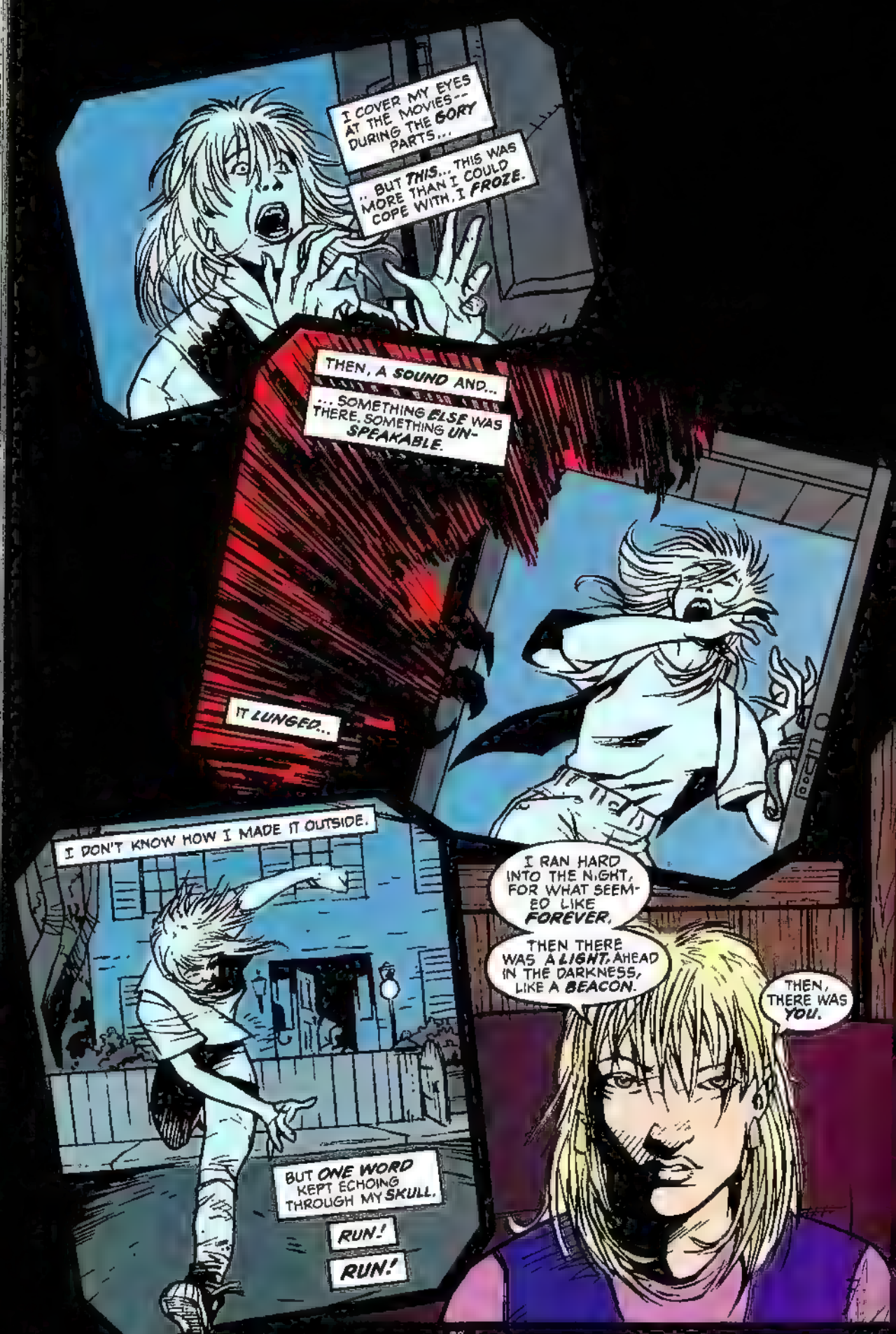
JON BABCOCK
LETTERER

SARRA MOSSOFF
COLORIST


MY FAMILY AND I-- WE WERE-- THEY WERE... THERE WAS ALL THE... AND I-- I RAN, BUT IT WAS SO-- SO HORRIBLE, AND NOW I--
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
Ohmigod!
Y-YOUR FACE--
WH-WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?
EVER HEARD OF THE PHRASE "YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE OTHER GUY?"
I WAS THE OTHER GUY.
WAIT. I KNOW YOU.
YOU'RE JOHNNY BLAZE-- THE STUNT CYCLIST!
JOHN. JOHN BLAZE.
MY DAD TOOK ME TO SEE YOUR SHOW BEFORE HE-- WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
IS THAT WHAT IT WAS? A MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT?
I--I'M SORRY.
ANCIENT HISTORY. DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT.
I TRY NOT TO.
SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY IT WAS A "MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENT."
BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY. AND NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
HAVE A SEAT.

THERE COMES A POINT WHEN IT'S EASIER TO GO WITH THE CURRENT THAN TRY TO FIGHT IT.
GOING WITH THE CURRENT'S ABOUT ALL MY LIFE'S AMOUNTED TO THE LAST FEW YEARS.
AND SHE'D SAID THE MAGIC WORD --FAMILY...
WHY HAVE YOU COME TO ME?
I--I'M NOT SURE.
THEN TELL ME WHAT YOU REMEMBER. START AT THE BEGINNING. WHO ARE YOU?
ALL RIGHT.
MY NAME IS JESSICA. JESSICA GOLE.
I LIVE IN LANCASTER WITH MY MOM, HER HUSBAND, AND MY BROTHER, JIM.
"THERE ISN'T REALLY MORE TO TELL THAN THAT. NOTHING UNUSUAL.
"I REMEMBER IT WAS EVENING. I WAS JUST GETTING HOME FROM A LATE-NIGHT STUDY SESSION.
"IT FIRST HIT ME AS I APPROACHED THE HOUSE. SOME NAMELESS, INTANGIBLE DREAD...
"...WHICH CRYSTALIZED INTO CRUSHING FEAR THE MOMENT I OPENED THE DOOR."

"THE ROOM WAS RED-- WITH THE OCCASIONAL SPLOTCH OF GREEN AND BROWN.
"TERROR GRAPPLED WITH HORROR FOR PREEMINENCE IN MY HEART.
"THE STENCH HIT FIRST-- LIKE RAW SEWAGE BOILED DOWN TO ITS PRIMAL ESSENCE.
"MY STOMACH COULDN'T DECIDE WHETHER TO RISE OR DROP.
"THEN CAME THE MEMORIES.
"I'VE HEARD THAT CERTAIN SMELLS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO TRIGGER SUCH EPISODES.
"A THOUSAND SCREAMING SHARDS OF THE PAST PENETRATED MY MIND, AS I RELIVED THEM, ONE BY ONE, IN THE SPACE OF AN INSTANT.
"BIRTHDAY PARTIES, FRIENDS-- SOME ALL BUT FORGOTTEN-- MY CAT, 'MISS FISH'...
"SHE DIED, THEY SAID, AND WASN'T COMING BACK EVER AGAIN.


I COVER MY EYES AT THE MOVIES-- DURING THE GORY PARTS...
...BUT THIS... THIS WAS MORE THAN I COULD COPE WITH. I FROZE.
THEN, A SOUND AND...
...SOMETHING ELSE WAS THERE. SOMETHING UN-SPEAKABLE.
IT LUNGED...
I DON'T KNOW HOW I MADE IT OUTSIDE.
I RAN HARD INTO THE NIGHT, FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE FOREVER.
THEN THERE WAS A LIGHT AHEAD IN THE DARKNESS, LIKE A BEACON.
THEN, THERE WAS YOU.
BUT ONE WORD KEPT ECHOING THROUGH MY SKULL.
RUN!
RUN!

Y-YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, DO YOU?
ON THE CONTRARY, I KNOW YOUR STORY IS TRUE.
YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE IF IT WEREN'T.
EXIT
I SOLD MY SOUL NOT SO LONG AGO, TO A CREATURE MUCH LIKE THE ONE YOU DESCRIBED.
STILL PAYING OFF THAT DEBT.
YOU WERE RIGHT TO COME TO ME. I MIGHT JUST BE ABLE TO HELP YOU.
THANK YOU.
DON'T THANK ME YET. I'LL NEED YOUR HELP TO PUT THINGS RIGHT.
BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS OVER, YOU MAY WELL WISH YOU'D NEVER MET ME.
WE'VE A LONG RIDE AHEAD--AND FROM WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME, ONE UGLY SUCKER GUARDING THE DOOR.
BEST TO BE PREPARED.
Y-YOUR BIKE--! YOU SHOT IT...
...AND NOW IT'S ON FIRE?!
AS THE MAN ONCE SAID...
..."THERE ARE MORE THINGS TWIXT HEAVEN AND EARTH THAN ARE DREAMT OF IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY."
BUT, BE WARNED...
...TO THE CREATURE WE'RE STALKING...
...HEAVEN AND EARTH AREN'T EXACTLY WHAT YOU'D CALL HOME!

HOME.

BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE *THAT* WORD'S HELD ANY MEANING FOR ME.

FOR JESSICA, IT MEANT A TWO-STORY CAPE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

AT LEAST, IT *USED* TO.

AN AURA OF FEAR *SURROUNDS* THE PLACE. MAKES MY SKIN ITCH -- WHAT'S *LEFT* OF IT.

SEEMS OUR FRIEND DOESN'T WANT ANY *UNEXPECTED GUESTS* POACHING ON HIS PROPERTY.

TOO BAD.

HE JUST GOT TWO MORE THAN HE *BARGAINED* FOR.

LET'S GO.

M-MISTER BLAZE?

I-I CAN'T GO BACK IN THERE.

PLEASE DON'T *MAKE* ME!

I CAN'T "*MAKE*" YOU DO ANYTHING, JESSICA. WE ALL HAVE THE GIFT OF *FREE WILL*...

...UP TO A *POINT.*

SOMETIMES THE KARMIC WHEEL SPINS *FOR* US...

...BUT USUALLY IT'S *OUR* CALL.

DEEP DOWN, YOU *KNOW* WHAT MUST BE DONE.

I'M *SCARED.*

I KNOW.

BUT YOU MUST ENTER *FREELY*...

...OR NOT AT ALL.

YOUR CHOICE.

I--

I'M *WITH* YOU, MISTER BLAZE.

I'M *WITH* YOU ALL THE *WAY.*

EMPTY.

AND PICKED CLEAN.

KRAK!

OUR BOGEYMAN'D DONE HIS BUSINESS, THEN *MOPPED UP.*

FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING.

THERE'S *NO ONE-- NOTHING-- HERE?!*

NOT *NOW,* MAYBE. BUT NOT LONG GONE.

VIBES ARE TOO INTENSE.

BETTER CHECK THE REST OF THE HOUSE.

USED TO HEAR ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS, BACK WITH THE *CARNY.*

SIDESHOW FREAKS SITTING AROUND A CAMPFIRE, SCARING THE *DEVIL* OUT OF EACH OTHER WITH "TRUE" STORIES OF *HUMAN MISERY.*

THE MAN WITH *ANTS* NESTING IN HIS INTESTINES.

THE WOMAN WHO HUNG HERSELF WITH HER OWN *ENTRAILS.*

THE HOUSE THAT DEVOURED ITS OWNERS, LEAVING ONLY *SOAP SHAVINGS* AND *SOOT.*

THOUGHT IT WAS ALL *MACHO ONE-UPMANSHIP.*

SHOWS WHAT *I* KNEW.

SEEMS LIKE *NOBODY'S* HOME.

THAT'LL *CHANGE.*

KRAK!

I'M LIKE A *MAGNET* FOR THIS STUFF.

ONE WHIFF, AND THEY *CAN'T* STAY AWAY.

LOOKS LIKE A *TORNADO* TOUCHED DOWN HERE.

NO.. THIS IS *MY* ROOM!

IT *ALWAYS* LOOKS THIS WAY.

Ohh .. POOR LITTLE THING.

YOU'VE FALLEN OFF THE *DRESSER* AND BROKEN YOUR *LEG*.

MY *DAD*-- MY *REAL* DAD GAVE ME THIS BALLERINA.

I'D SEEN A BALLERINA ON *TELEVISION*, AND I DECIDED I WANTED TO *BE* ONE.

HE PAID FOR SOME *LESSONS*, A *TUTU*, THE *WHOLE DEAL*.

I WASN'T VERY GOOD.

DAD COULD SEE I WASN'T *MEANT* TO BE A DANCER..

... BUT HE WANTED ME TO *BELIEVE* IN MYSELF... AND IN MY *DREAMS*.

AND *THEN*, OF COURSE, HE *DIED*, AS HUMAN THINGS ARE *WONT* TO DO.

GET BACK, JESSICA!
I'M SO PLEASED TO FINALLY MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, MISTER BLAZE. YOUR REPUTATION HAS PRECEDED YOU!
THE WAY YOU BESTED MEPHISTO HAS ELICITED MANY A CHUCKLE WHERE I'M FROM ...A PLACE NOT REKNOWNED FOR ITS GOOD HUMOR.
I DOUBT THE OLD BOY WILL EVER LIVE IT DOWN.
WHAT DO YOU WANT HERE?
ME?
I AM BUT A WEARY TRAVELER, ON HOLIDAY, HELD OVER IN A FOREIGN LAND.
I DESIRE ONLY A MOMENT'S COMFORT AND A FILLING MEAL BEFORE CONTINUING ABOUT MY BUSINESS.
TH-THE WALLS!
PARLOR TRICKS. YOUR SORT LOVES TO IMPRESS, DOESN'T IT?

HOW VERY *COMMON* OF YOU TO SUGGEST SUCH A THING.

IF *THIS* IS HOW YOU TREAT VISITORS, IT'S NO *WONDER* THIS *BACK-WATER PURVIEW* IS SO SELDOM TROD BY THOSE OF MY *STATION*.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY *NO NEED* FOR RUDENESS.

YEAH? I CAN THINK OF A FEW. THE KID'S *PARENTS*, FOR A START.

Ahhh... THE *CORPSES*.

YOU KNOW HOW IT GOES, I'M SURE. YOU WAKE UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WITH A CRAVING FOR *SWEETS*.

AND, WELL YOU CAN'T EAT JUST *ONE*.

FEEL FREE TO LEAVE AT ANY TIME, MISTER BLAZE. YOU'RE AN AMUSING FELLOW. I *LIKE* YOU, AND I SUSPECT YOUR SOUL WOULD TASTE A TRIFLE... *TAINTED*.

BUT THE YOUNG LADY HERE WILL BE STAYING WITH ME.

GET BENT!

COME NOW, YOU'RE BEING QUITE UNREASONABLE.
WE'RE BOTH MEN OF THE WORLD. WE'VE BOTH, SHALL WE SAY, BEEN AROUND.
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I THE REASON FOR THE CHILD'S CURRENT DILEMMA.
NOTHING COULD HAVE EVADED MY FIRST ATTACK.
NOTHING!
NOW, I'VE DONE MY PART. I'VE PERFORMED THE RITES, MOUTHED THE WORDS, DRAWN THE SIGILS.
I'VE DOTTED THE I's AND CROSSED THE T's.
THERE CAN BE NO DISPUTING MY CLAIM.
I'VE ALREADY KILLED HER.
I JUST HAVEN'T EATEN HER YET!

AIYEEEE!
FWOOOSH!
Oh, DEAR.
THAT WASN'T VERY NICE.
THAT WASN'T VERY NICE AT ALL.
..THAT COMMON COURTESY IS WASTED UPON BOORISH LOW-DWELLERS LIKE YOU!
VERY WELL.
I CAN SEE NOW...
VIOLENCE IS OBVIOUSLY ALL YOUR FEEBLE MIND CAN COMPREHEND...
..."WHEN IN ROME"...

KRAKK
YOU SHOULD HAVE AVAILED YOURSELF OF MY GENEROSITY.
ZARATHOS'S SEED NO LONGER LIES WITHIN YOU.
YOU CANNOT LOOK TO HIM FOR PROTECTION--eh?
FAH! FOUL BLOOD-METAL!
RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING, SLUG!
ZARATHOS DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE!
HIS CORD'S BEEN CUT...
AND NOW I'M GONNA DO THE SAME TO YOU!
SSSHRIIPPT!
GYAAHH--
MISTER BLAZE!
DO YOU NEVER TIRE OF SUCH BOURGEOIS SLOGANEERING?
THWIIPPT!
NOW BEGONE! LEAVE ME TO MY MEAL!

UHNG!
KRUK!
I KNEW YOU'D RETURN. YOU HAD TO, AFTER ALL. IT WAS FATE--KISMET!
THERE IS NO NEED FOR FEAR YOUR DEATH HAS ALREADY OCCURRED.
WHAT FOLLOWS SHALL BE PAINLESS AND SWIFT.
STUPID, COCKY OLD MAN!
GET THE LANDING!
FWOOSH!
JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS...
KRAKAK ROOOM!
... BRING DOWN THE HOUSE!
AAAAAAAAAA!
STUPID, STUPID MAN-CREATURE. STILL YOU INTERCEDE!
YOUR PERSISTENCE SHALL PROVE THE DEATH OF YOU!

AKK!
GYAH!
YOUR HELLFIRE MEANS LITTLE TO ONE BIRTHED IN THE PITS OF DAMNATION.
IN FACT, IT'S RATHER LIKE A SOOTHING SAUNA!
I SUPPOSE I AM OBLIGED TO LEAVE YOU A GRATUITY!
I OFFER YOU THIS ONE LAST CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL, BLAZE. LEAVE NOW...
...OR JOIN THE YOUNGLING IN MY GULLET.
IF I'VE LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT THE SPIRIT WORLD...
...IT'S THAT YOUR AVERAGE DEMON IS OVERLY SELF-SATISFIED...
.. AND THEREFORE SLOPPY!

THE MOMENT I'D BEEN WAITING FOR HAD *COME*.

IT'S MERELY A *FORMALITY* THIS POINT.

LEFT TO IT'S OWN, YOUR SPIRIT WOULD *WAFT AWAY*, YOUR ESSENCE SCATTER ACROSS THE *ASTRAL PLANES*.

THIS WAY ITS END SERVES A *PURPOSE*.

MY KIND NEVER KILLS MORE THAN IT EATS...

...AND *NEVER* EATS LESS THAN IT KILLS.

NOW *THAT*...

...*THAT* WOULD BE A *SIN!*

I KNEW HOW IT WOULD END BEFORE SHE EVEN SPOKE.

BECAUSE FOR HER, THE GAME HAD ALREADY BEEN *PLAYED*.

BUT THERE WOULD BE *OTHER* PLAYERS, *OTHER* VICTIMS.

I COULDN'T *HELP* HER, COULDN'T *SAVE* HER.

THE MOST I COULD DO WAS MAKE SURE HER KILLER *PAID*-- AND KEEP IT FROM KILLING *AGAIN!*

AND HOPE IT WOULD BE ENOUGH.

AAAAAAAAAAA!

FWOOOSSH!

SOMETIMES, ERRANT SPIRITS-- LOST SOULS-- CAN'T REST UNTIL THEY'VE PERFORMED SOME *FINAL SERVICE* UPON THE MORTAL PLANE.

JESSICA HAD REMAINED BEHIND TO AID IN THE DEMON'S DESTRUCTION.

HER SPIRIT SERVED AS A *CONDUIT,* THROUGH WHICH THE HELLFIRE AT MY COMMAND COULD ENTER THE FIEND'S BODY...

...DEVOURING THE BEAST FROM WITHIN...

...AND CONSUMING HER *IMMORTAL SOUL.*

THE DANCE WAS OVER.

NO REST FOR THE INNOCENT.
NOT SO AMUSING ANYMORE, AM I?
YOU... DESTROYED HER. BURNED AWAY HER SOUL FOR ALL ETERNITY... JUST TO GET AT ME!
WELL DONE, BLAZE. I LIKE YOUuuuuuu...
SOMETIMES, THE KARMIC WHEEL SPINS FOR US.
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE.
JESSICA'S SPIRIT HAD CEASED ITS WANDERINGS, AND FOUND A PEACE, OF SORTS--IN DISCORPORATION.
BY MY HAND.
MY ONLY CONSOLATION--SUCH AS IT IS--IS THAT, THROUGH MY ACTIONS, I HAVE GRANTED A DEAD GIRL'S DYING WISH.
SLEEP WELL, JESSICA.
THE LIGHT IS GONE. ONLY BLACK AND WHITE REMAIN.
WHICH AM I, I WONDER. WHICH AM I?

BULLPEN BULLETINS

MARVEL COMICS

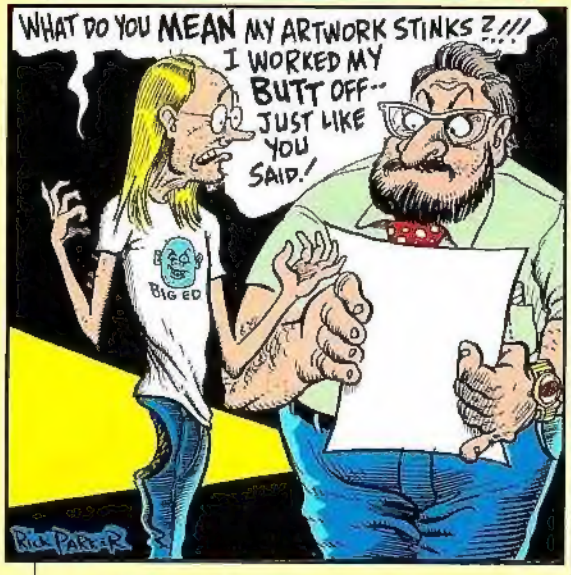
PROFILE: Ron Garney

Ron Garney entered the fast lane of the comics biz three years ago as artist on MOON KNIGHT, followed by a terrifying stint on NIGHTSTALKERS. Since then, Ron has kept his engine running red hot, and is now the penciler of GHOST RIDER. Ron slowed down long enough to answer a few questions.

Where and when were you born?
On October 20, 1962, in Torrington, Connecticut, in Charlotte Hungerford Hospital.
How did you break into comics?
I was drawing when I was two. I have drawings of Superman and Batman that I did at that age. As far as my earliest real experience, that was three years ago. I was working behind a bar when one of the other bartenders brought in a SECRET WARS issue. I was in the middle of that stage where I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I had forgotten about comics, and seeing that SECRET WARS issue just brought me back

I was hooked from that point on. I worked on some samples, I brought them in to Marvel, and I just got lucky. My timing was good. Danny Fingeroth and Bobbie Chase both gave me some work on the spot, and since then, I've had the privilege of working with just about every other editor at Marvel.
Where did you receive your training?
I'm pretty much self-taught, as far as comics. In college, I majored in graphic design and psychology. Right after college, I was doing graphic design and artwork for area magazines, and I was not happy doing it. It just wasn't what I wanted to do.
Who are some of your creative influences?
There are so many. Norman Rockwell, I admire a lot. Patrick Nagel — even though he's dead (laughter) ... In comic books, John Buscema, Neal Adams, John Byrne, Joe Kubert ... just about anybody in the business who I consider to be good. John Romita Jr. I like a lot.
Who are some of your favorite performers?
Lynyrd Skynyrd, when they were good ... Steven Wright ... Imus in the morning ... Rush Limbaugh ... Arnold Schwarzennegger ... I like Kevin Costner's movies ... Michelle Pfeiffer — Mm-mm-mm! ... Aerosmith ...
Since you work on GHOST RIDER, we're required to ask you this question: do you ride a motorcycle?
I used to. I had a Yamaha 750. My dad owned a Harley. But I haven't ridden for a few years.
What are your hobbies?
Music, sports, and watching Godzilla movies!
What advice would you have for aspiring comics pros?
Draw your (butt) off! If you do happen to get in, try not to jump around projects too much because you develop a more solid style quicker by staying on a certain character. Your style develops a character of its own. Also, don't just look at comics. Study a lot of different art techniques.
What are some of your all-time favorite comics?
The old THORs by Walt Simonson — that whole "Ragnarok" story is a great read. I can always pull them out and enjoy them. I loved John Romita Jr.'s stint on DAREDEVIL with Ann Nocenti. *Sin City* ...
What super power would you most like to have?
To zap all the people I can't stand out of existence!

THE BULL'S EYE BY RICK PARKER



The Bullpen Beat

Movies, toys, cartoons, rock & roll, and comics.

Especially comics. Marvel 1994 is going to be a blast. At MARVEL AGE, it's up to us to bring you *inside*.

But how? Funny you should ask ...

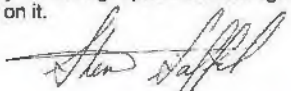
First, we've assigned our best reporters to the hot beats — skilled professionals covering *Marvel Films, Toy Biz, Fleer, Marvel Music,* and *Consumer Products* — keeping on top of the late-breaking stories even as they hit.

We've signed excellent photographers so upcoming features — like those on the Marvel animation studio and the annual *Toy Fair* — hit with full, exciting impact.

And we've begun grilling top talents for their trade secrets, as in this month's pieces on Chuck Dixon's hard-boiled *Punisher* writing, Fleer's 1994 "Ultra-secret" plans, and how Rafael Kayanan's martial arts training affects his *Conan* artwork.

MARVEL AGE is assembling top talent, and their goal is to bring you *inside*. Since we're *already* inside, we're *always* in the right placed at the right time.

Count on it.



— Steve Saffel

NOW ON SALE

- **AVENGERS #373:** Just whose *side* are the Avengers on? By Harras/Epting/Palmer!
- **BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD #2:** The city morgue is *cool!* By Lackey/ Parker!
- **COSMIC POWERS #2 OF 6:** **Terrax** and **Thanos** are two chips off the ol' rock! By Marz/Moore/Williams!
- **DOOM 2099 #16:** Doom enters China 2099! By Moore/Broderick/Nyberg!
- **ECTOKID #8:** Dex enters a living being — but at what price? By Wachowski/Skroce/Dvorak!
- **EXCALIBUR #76: Nightcrawler** crawls alone! By Ashford/Lashley!
- **G.I. JOE #147:** Bang, zoom — Cobra is going to the *moon!* By Hama/Gosier/Wallace!
- **INCREDIBLE HULK #416:** Traumatic showdown with **Trauma** and the **Silver Surfer!** By David/ Frank/Smith!
- **MARVEL AGE #135:** Previewing GHOST RIDER 2099 and 4 new Punishers! Covers by Buscema & Kayanan!
- **MARVEL COMICS #152:** By popular demand — the **Mad Arab** takes on Wolverine! By various!
- **MARVEL TALES #284:** The **Hobgoblin** unmasked — sort of! By DeFalco/Frenz/Breeding!
- **MIDNIGHT SONS UNLIMITED #5:** Who will *lead* the Midnight Sons? By Quinn/Hixson/Koblish!
- **MORBIUS #20:** The Living Vampire becomes the Living *Human!* By Wright/Napolitano/Cabrera!
- **PUNISHER #89:** The Punisher has his own definition of Miami Vice! By Dixon/Heath!
- **PUNISHER IN THE 'NAM: FINAL INVASION:** Frank's going back to the 'Nam for the last time! By Lomax/Salchann!
- **REN & STIMPY: POWDERED TOAST MAN #1:** It's toast-terrific! By Slott/Templeton!
- **SPIDER-MAN #45:** Spidey wants the man who killed his *parents!* By Mackie/Lyle/Hanna!
- **THUNDERSTRIKE #7:** Tragedy strikes as **Code Blue** loses a member! By DeFalco/Frenz/ Milgrom!
- **TRANSFORMERS: GENERATION 2 #6: Optimus Prime** wants everyone to be more user-friendly! By Furman/Galan & Yanagher!
- **WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #27:** The **Avengers** want to disassemble the Watch! By Starlin/Grindberg/Almond!
- **WHAT IF #60:** Three tales tied in to the upcoming **X-Men** wedding! By Busiek/Randall/Nichols!
- **WOLVERINE TPB: WEAPON X:** Mommy, where did **Wolverine** come from? By Windsor-Smith!
- **X-MEN #31:** Unlocking the secrets of **Psylocke!** By Nicieza/Kubert/ Ryan!
- **X-MEN 2099 #7:** You could have a nervous breakdown fighting **Breakdown!** By Moore/Lim/ Sanders II!

WAR IN THIS WEEK'S *HULK* ... VENGEANCE, MOON KNIGHT, AND WAR MACHINE IN *MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS*

BULLPEN BORDERLINE BUZZ ... BUZZ? SOUNDS LIKE "BUTT" HEH-HEH HEH-HEH, SAYS *BEAVIS* ... *TERRAX* HAS WOMAN TROUBLE ... THE CLIMAX OF THE TROYJAN ... *BLOODTHIRST* LIVES IN MORBIUS ... WHAT IS PANDARA'S CONNECTION TO THE *BLACKWULF*? ... WHO IS *REVANCHE* REALLY, *PSYLOCKE* WANTS TO KNOW ...